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The Wreck of the Deutschland and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius; A Comparison

John Joseph Powell
Loyola University Chicago

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"THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND" AND
THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST.
IGNATIUS: A COMPARISON.

by
JOHN J. POWELL, S.J., A.B.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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VITA AUCTORIS

John Joseph Powell, S.J., was born in Chicago, Illinois, September 22, 1925. He received his elementary-school education at the John B. Murphy public school in Chicago. In June, 1943, he graduated from Loyola Academy in Chicago.

In August, 1943, he entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio, where he spent the next four years. In the Fall of 1947, he began his three-year course in Philosophy at West Baden College, and enrolled in Loyola University where he took his Bachelor of Arts degree the following June. He began his graduate work in Loyola University in the Fall of 1948.

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CHAPTER I

ST. IGNATIUS AND FATHER HOPKINS

Most questions, such as the one we are about to treat, are single phases of larger, more challenging problems. Although it would be desirable to treat of the broader and more complete aspects of these problems for the sake of perspective, it is quite impossible because of the necessary limits of space and time.

The influence exercised on the genius of Gerard Manley Hopkins by religious life is one of these larger questions. As the varied facets of Father Hopkins' genius have come to be recognized, since the publication of his poems in 1918, the question of "religious life and Father Hopkins" has grown into something of an open debate for Catholics and Non-Catholics alike.

It would be naive to say, as some do, without qualification of any sort, that the influence of religious life on Father Hopkins' genius and art was "good" or "bad". The problem is obviously too complex for so simple an assertion. This is the problem in its widest scope.

However, within this compass there has arisen another

more tractable dispute. It concerns the influence which the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius had on Father Hopkins. There have been many who have taken sides in this discussion. Many, a few Catholics among the more numerous Non-Catholics, have articulately regretted that influence; not because they have no appreciation of Father Hopkins' abilities, but it is precisely because they do have some appreciation of his talents, in addition to grand visions of what Hopkins might have been if he had wrested himself free from the constrictions of St. Ignatius' little book.

Others, the majority, I think, oppose this view, even though they might well admit that in some small way the Spiritual Exercises limited Hopkins' art, remembering T.S. Eliot's remark that to be merely a devotional poet is a limitation. Still, no one would question the superiority of a tremendous devotional writer, such as Hopkins, over a poet of wider range but of lesser force and intensity. If, therefore, the great spiritual strength and inspiration of the Exercises were the wings on which Father Hopkins could soar, there is little room for debate on the influence of the Exercises. On this supposition that influence was for good.

However, our present treatment considers an even smaller phase of this second problem. We intend to treat of the influence of the Spiritual Exercises as found in the first poem

of Hopkins' maturity, "The Wreck of the Deutschland." It will be shown, first of all, that the poem has for its theme the theme of the Spiritual Exercises, and secondly, that the development of the poem, along its general lines, follows the exact sequence of the Exercises.

This thesis, strictly speaking, is not an attempt to trace, in this parallel, the psychological effect that the Exercises had on Father Hopkins. Our only concern will be to establish the fact of the above-mentioned similarities. Of course there is no question of arriving at any conclusion concerning the larger dispute of Hopkins and the Spiritual Exercises. Perhaps, though, this paper will offer some concrete evidence that the Exercises were a source of inspiration to the poet-priest, and consequently, a help to his art.

The story of Ignatius Loyola, the soldier-saint, is one that is well known. The episodes that cluster about the name of this Basque nobleman and ascetic, his early years of vanity, the battle of Pampeluna, his conversion and apostolate, have been well-explored by his biographers. His life has been a wealth of inspiration to the thousands who have followed him, becoming his sons in the Society of Jesus. Among these was an English poet of our own times, Gerard Manley Hopkins.

But long before St. Ignatius had proposed the Society of

Jesus to anyone, he set himself to forge a means by which he could bring men to see as he did, to give themselves over unreservedly to God's holy Will. The result of this determination was his Spiritual Exercises, whose title has become permanently affixed to his own name. In these Exercises is found an attitude toward the spiritual life which may be said to be peculiarly his own, if there is anything of St. Ignatius which is such.

With a certain artless simplicity, the saint plunges to the depth of truths of the moral order. His style is notable only for the energetic precision with which he frames certain ideas in terms that are concise and unforgettable. There is neither learned rhetoric nor exaggeration, mystic symbolism, bombast. There are only a few outpourings of the soul in some few colloquies, but the intensity of this little book does not reside so much in the words as in the situations proposed by the saint: the sinner before his crucifix, the knight before his king, the creature before his Creator and the court of Heaven.

With this book, universal in its simplicity and powerful in its brevity, Ignatius wanted to lift men out of themselves, out of their surroundings; to enable them to view their lives as a thing apart, so that they might order those lives according to the perspective of the greater whole. For

this end Ignatius proposes that the exercitant meditate profoundly on the fact of creation, creatural obligations, on sin, Hell, the life, death and resurrection of Christ. He insisted, too, that these Exercises be made in exact sequence, for it is upon the cumulative psychology that they depend for their full effect. Later, when we trace this sequence and these considerations in Hopkins' poem, we will consider them in greater detail, but this pencil-sketch of St. Ignatius' great spiritual conception will suffice for the present.

One of the many great minds that has been staggered by the tremendous force of the Exercises was that of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Born at Stratford, Essex, in 1844, in the same year as Nietzsche, he grew up and into the age of the "Oxford Movement," Tract 90, and Cardinal John Henry Newman. We can hardly appreciate the poet if we overlook the significance of this period. Through the years of Gerard Hopkins' boyhood there was a great exodus from the Anglican Communion To Rome. There were tremendous minds and great figures like Father Faber, Cardinal Manning, Patmore, Aubrey and Stephen de Vere, Adelaide Proctor and Augusta Drane transferring their allegiance to Rome. They were courageous souls leaving all to find all, whose number is still the secret of the King!

It was during these tumultuous years that young Gerard Hopkins was receiving his preliminary education at the Chol-

mondeley School, Highgate. From there he passed in 1867 to Oxford, where he entered upon his classical first course at Baliol. Here he was tutored and befriended by the great artist of words, Walter Pater. Before leaving Oxford, in his twenty-third year, Gerard Hopkins followed the searching minds of his day into the haven of the Roman Catholic Church. He was received by his good friend, John Henry Newman, with whom he remained for six months in the Birmingham Oratory.

In 1868, he quietly took another step that greatly surprised and dismayed those who knew and loved him. He turned his extremely sensitive nature and his precocious abilities in submission to Ignatian discipline. His protesting friends feared the consequences. They feared that the ordinary rigors of religious life would wilt so delicate and sensitive a soul. Cardinal Newman, however, advised him not to call the Jesuit discipline hard, for it would bring him to Heaven. In the meantime, Gerard Hopkins' keen intellect had been focused clearly on that ascetic ideal which he has so beautifully described in his well-known poem, "The Habit of Perfection:"

Elected silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips: be lovely-dumb:
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelled eyes, with doubled dark
 And find the uncreated light:
 This rock and reel which you remark
 Coils, keep and teases simple sight.

...

And poverty, be thou the bride
 And now the marriage feast begun,
 And lily-coloured clothes provide
 Your spouse not laboured at, nor spun.

During his two years as a novice at Manresa and during his three years at Stonyhurst, where he studied philosophy, and his years at St. Bueno's theologate, "elected silence" sings to young Hopkins, and his lips are "lovely-dumb." He writes nothing; he hears only that grand music of the soul which is heard only in "elected silence." Then, in 1875, after his first year of theology: The Wreck of the Deutschland.

By that time the undercurrents of seven years of religious life had effected considerable changes in Professor Jowett's "Star of Baliol." He had grown considerably deeper; his analytic mind had become keener; his chart of values was reshuffled and revised. They were years of growth, change, conflict. About this last, Father Francis Ryan writes:

There were in him two opposing strains which conditioned all his life and work. He was interested, with all his faculties, in strangeness ('all things counter, original, spare, stragge') and had a passionate love and sensibility for out-of-the-way beauty, especially for beauty hidden in familiar things; but he had also a love and rever-

ence for authority and exact discipline which increased with the years - since his interests and training as a classical scholar and as a Jesuit, as well as the natural bias of maturity and experience, all tended that way.¹

The extent and force of the influence exerted by religious life upon Hopkins, as has been mentioned, is a source of lively controversy: did it make for greater poetry, or was it the stifling of a poet? It is only one small phase we treat of now in showing that the Exercises were the underlying inspiration of the Deutschland.

Whatever the solution of this moot question, one thing is made obvious by Hopkins' biographers, namely, that his oblation in accepting the Church and the Society of Jesus was admirably complete. G.F. Lahey writes:

Such then was Gerard Hopkins when he submitted himself to the yoke of the Church and the Society of Jesus. His oblation is extraordinary enough, it was certainly not unique. That Gerard included with the holocaust of himself the ashes of his poems, manifests the courageous realization he had of his calling. Indeed no superior ever hinted at this immolation of the poetic instinct, and a few years afterwards his Rector asked him to write again; but the fact, however trivial, shows the power that principle played in his life.²

¹ Francis Ryan, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," The Dublin Review, No. 443, 1948, 124.

² G.F. Lahey, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Oxford U. Press, London, 1930, 128.

There are many who believe that these years of religious life were years in which great talent lay fallow. T. Weiss, who has edited selections from Hopkins' notebooks, complains:

Like the energies his cassock muted, this humanity in him must, charged with grandeur a god might respect, burst forth in turmoiled lines. Only such a strength as his could destroy this strength; the grinding within him of energies ignored finally tore him apart. Religion seems to have become for him the rock that balked his senses and impaled him. It crushed his otherwise inviolable integrity, something his literary conscience had allowed no other experience to do. For him religion was the experience that denied all others, even himself. As Rimbaud put it: "Christ: eternal thief of energies." ... Hopkins could not break free short of death, could not realize that devotion to art, especially one as responsible and piercing as his, might be life, service, and sanctity enough.³

These remarks, however, betray a disappointing blindness to the great growth that was being effected in Hopkins during these years. For during this time his keen sensitivities were becoming aware of new depths of meaning, while his mental life was raised to new and more sublime heights. His range was expanded to include man and all of nature. All of this development was focused against a background of moral truth and perception that is beyond most artists. Hopkins' last words on earth were: "I am so happy." Was this the final breath and the

³ Selections from the Note-Books of Gerard Manley Hopkins, T. Weiss, ed., Oxford U. Press, London, 1937, iv.

last sentiment of one whom "the grinding of energies finally tore apart"? Rather it was the growth of these years that afforded Father Hopkins his inspiration in all he wrote and did during the remainder of his life.

Rev. Raymond Schoder, S.J., writes of this growth:

But it is evident from his poems and prose, from the testimony of those who knew him intimately, even those wholly out of sympathy with his Catholic and Jesuit ideal, that Hopkins was a man of profound spirituality, an ardent lover of Christ, whose greatest concern in life was to be able to say with St. Paul, 'I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me' Gal. 2:20. It must be remembered, too, that as a Jesuit he would spend three or more hours a day in prayer and other spiritual exercises, and that he was notable for the earnestness with which he strove for ever fuller perfection in this union with Christ.⁴

It is this union with Christ, this firm growth in moral perception, the purpose of the Spiritual Exercises, that seven years of religious life had added to Hopkins. To understand and appreciate his poetry, especially the Deutschland, it is very necessary to understand this spiritual cumulation of the earlier years of Hopkins' religious life. For like waters which gather sufficient bulk and break through the dam, this spiritual intensity of Hopkins was to break forth after seven years of religious life into a strangely new and fascinating

⁴ Raymond V. Schoder, S.J., "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," reprinted from Thought, XIX, No. 75, Dec. 1944, 640.

poetry. The precursor of these poems was The Wreck of the Deutschland.

The place of the Spiritual Exercises in the generation of this spiritual intensity can only be understood by a realization of the force the Exercises are in the life and formation of every Jesuit. In his biography of Hopkins, John Pick says:

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Spiritual Exercises in the life of a Jesuit. St. Ignatius had considered them the most important armour of his sons; the Constitutions of the Society urge their constant use, and recently Father La Farge wrote of them:

'The personal practice of the Spiritual Exercises is especially a perpetual means of generation. By means of them every Jesuit is reminded every year of his life of the primitive ideals of his order.'

... For twenty-one years Hopkins dedicated himself to the Society of Jesus; for twenty-one years he studied, meditated, and practiced the Spiritual Exercises. They became a part of his life and attitude. They gave direction to all he experienced, thought and wrote... They fashioned his reaction to nature and beauty.... They moulded his native temperament and sensibility to and ideal of perfection. Without knowing something of them we can hardly know the priest-poet. 5

Then, after outlining the plan of the Exercises, Pick com-

5 John Pick, Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet, Oxford U. Press, London, 1942, 25.

ments:

Such then are the Spiritual Exercises which St. Ignatius made the centre of the life of every Jesuit. The story of Gerard Manley Hopkins from 1868, when he entered the Jesuit Novitiate, till 1889 when he died is largely the story of the pervasive influence of the Spiritual Exercises upon him. ⁶

Thus we have had a glimpse of the two well-known personalities involved in this problem: St. Ignatius and Father Hopkins. We have sketched lightly some of the influences that converged in shaping Hopkins. Interpreted variously, no one denied these influences or disparages their profound force. We are ready now to watch them as they burst through the dam of seven years' silence, in his first great poem after his acquisition of the cassock, the Deutschland.

⁶ Ibid., 30.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE POEM: GOD'S MASTERY

The facts behind the end of Hopkins' poetical silence are found in one of his letters to his good friend, Canon Dixon. He wrote:

What I had written I burnt before I became a Jesuit and resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession, unless it were the wish of my superiors; so for seven years I wrote nothing but two or three little presentation pieces which occasion called for. But when in the winter of '75 the Deutschland was wrecked in the mouth of the Thames and five Franciscan nuns, exiles from Germany by the Falk Laws (a part of Bismarck's Kulturkampf), aboard of her were drowned, I was affected by the account, and, happening to say so to my rector, he said that he wished someone would write a poem on the subject. On this hint I set to work, and though my hand was out at first, produced one.¹

Into this poem were poured a thousand mingled influences, silence, religious meditation, and the great pervasive influence of the Spiritual Exercises. From these Exercises Hopkins had gained a new perception of reality; he had uncovered new meanings and significances in the universe. Like Ignatius,

¹ The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon, Claude Collier Abbott, ed., Oxford U. Press, London, 1935, 14.

his Father in religion, he had seen a new vision, a vision that had been haunting him, growing within him, expanding, and straining for expression. His rector's suggestion freed him to tell the story of the nuns in an entirely new way, but, more important, it freed him to tell his own story. He wrote to his friend, Robert Bridges, who felt the emotion in the Deutschland was distasteful and highly suspect:

I may add for your greatest interest and edification that what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding....The Deutschland would be more generally interesting if there were more wreck and less discourse, I know, but still it is an ode and not primarily a narrative. ²

There have been many, many others distrustful of the emotion and content of the poem: Catholics because of the obscurity to which Hopkins abandons his emotion; Non-Catholics because the poem is too specifically Catholic. Bernard Kelly instructed all who would read this poem to first meditate a fortnight on the Passion of our Lord. Father Francis Ryan says:

I believe it is best to look upon the poem as a meditation -- ... Meditation in this

² Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, Claude Collier Abbott, ed., Oxford U. Press, London, 1935, 47.

sense, after years of practising the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, had become second nature to Hopkins (I do not say ex professo he set out to make a meditation); so, when he set himself to write the poem, he produced something like a meditation, his text being that of a newspaper account that had touched him. ³

Since the publication of Hopkins' letters and papers, the sincerity of his emotion has been less and less called into question. Though there are many who are unable to respond fully to this emotion, it is commonly agreed that the Deutschland is a genuine expression of a genuine man. It is not at all surprising that so sincere a man, gifted with the fine sensibilities that no one denies to Father Hopkins, should have been touched by the incident of the Deutschland. That he should have transformed the journalist's narrative of the incident into a rich and strange lyric poem was the fault of his own spiritual intensity, and probably not a part of his original purpose.

An examination of the narrative sections of the poem reveals that his source material was drawn from an account of the Deutschland disaster, found in the newspaper, the Times. He was a student at St. Bueno's then, and the Times had a representative at Harwich who recorded the proceedings at the

³ Ryan, 131.

inquest for the victims of the wreck. Because of its introductory value, we put down part of that record here, passing over those parts which have no bearing on the poem:

The Deutschland got out of her course, and at about a quarter past 5 a.m. on Monday morning the captain was the first to see breakers ahead. He at once telegraphed into the engine-room 'Hard astern,' and there might have been time to save the ship if the screw propeller had not at this moment broken off, leaving her helpless in the trough of the sea...and in a very few moments the steamer was fixed upon the sands, between two and three miles to the north-west of the eastern end of the sandbank known as the Kentish-Knock....And now comes the most remarkable and pitiable chapter in a sad story. Rockets were thrown up directly the ship struck; in the blinding snowstorm, however, they no doubt were invisible to the lightships....But Monday was a tolerably clear day; passing vessels were distinctly seen from the Deutschland's deck, and every effort was made to attract their attention. But one after another passed by and night came on....I said that their situation first became perilous on Monday night, or rather Tuesday morning. At 2 a.m. Captain Brickenstein, knowing that with the rising tide the ship would be waterlogged, ordered all the passengers to come on deck....Women and children and men were one by one swept away from their shelters on the deck. Five German nuns, whose bodies are now in the dead-house here, clasped hands and were drowned together, the chief sister, a gaunt woman six feet high, calling out loudly and often, 'O Christ, come quickly!' till the end came....Four of the five nuns who perished by the wreck are to be buried at Leytonstone today. (Only four of their bodies were found.) After being made ready the bodies lay in state in the spacious schoolroom below the Franciscan Church at Stratford throughout Saturday and yesterday....The deceased ap-

peared to be between the ages of 30 and 40, and their faces wore an expression of calmness and resignation....One, noted for her extreme tallness, is the lady, who, at midnight on Monday, by standing on a table in the saloon, was able to thrust her body through the skylight, and kept exclaiming, in a voice heard by those in the rigging above the roar of the storm, 'My God, my God, make haste, make haste!' 4

This, then, is the skeleton of the story which provoked and inspired the Deutschland. Father Hopkins' transformation of this simple story has been, as we said, variously received. A Catholic critic of our day remarks:

He set out to give the world a Divine Tragedy; he produced a Divine Melodrama...Hopkins in this poem failed to be anything but dated. The poem is clearly of the Oh! Ah! school, and definitely mid-nineteenth century. 5

Herbert Reed, in a general defense of Hopkins, to answer critics such as Thornton, states:

Nothing could have made Hopkins' poetry popular in his day....But when the last decade of English poetry come to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 6

What probably accounts for the divergence in opinion

4 The Times, December 10, 11 and 13, 1875.

5 Francis Beauchesne Thornton, "Essay on the Wreck of the Deutschland," The Catholic World, CLX, 1944-5, 45.

6 Christopher Moreley, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," The Saturday Review of Literature, XIV, 1936, 13.

seems to be the critics' facility or difficulty in following and responding to the emotion of Father Hopkins, and persevering till his meanings have been reached; and these are sometimes difficult tasks for the reader.

This brings us to a discussion of the theme of the poem, and into the heart of this thesis. In determining the central theme we are faced with many difficulties, which stem from the great range of truth and emotion over which the poet's mind travels in the Deutschland. However, repeated readings leave one theme more than any other ringing in the mind. Father Ryan aptly expresses it for us in his critique of the poem:

The central theme which I find is: the mastery of God over mankind: His action to assert that mastery and bring all men to an acknowledgment of it -- all through the grace of Jesus Christ. 7

The idea of God exercising His mastery over man, as taught through the great grace of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, was a concept on which Father Hopkins' keen and analytic mind dwelled long and frequently. Complete conformity to the Divine Will in Jesus Christ is the only secret of the saints, and Father Hopkins was primarily an ascetic. The

7 Ryan, 131.

man who once complained to Robert Bridges that they never talked about the important things, but only of literature, had heard this truth -- and this is the counterpart of our thesis -- frequently from St. Ignatius. Ignatius' sole concern and end in formulating his Exercises were, as he himself put it, to help men "seek and find the will of God Concerning the ordering of life for the salvation of one's soul." So strongly does he emphasize the part of Christ's example in this reconversion that three full weeks of the Exercises are devoted to meditations on Christ, and contemplations of His life..Ignatius repeatedly urges the exercitant who is making the exercises to beg for an interior knowledge of Christ. Christ is the King, the Model!

To stress the point that such conformity to God's will in Jesus Christ is the theme of the Spiritual Exercises would be, perhaps, an elaboration of the obvious. To say that it is the theme of the Deutschland is only to corroborate what most of the sympathetic critics have said.

Besides Father Ryan, whom we have quoted, many have agreed to this central theme. W.H. Gardner, in an essay on the poem,⁸ says that the central theme is "reconciliation to the Will

⁸ W.H. Gardner, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," Essays and Studies, XXI, 1945, 132.

of God." John Pick is even more explicit in favoring our assumption. He writes:

Here is the very epitome of the Spiritual Exercises in the completeness of the poet's dedication to the imitation of Christ, to the pursuit of the highest ideal, the Alter Christus. (Other Christ) Here was answered the prayer he made when in the Exercises he asked for "an interior knowledge of our Lord, Who for me was made Man, in order that I may love Him better and follow Him more closely. 9

Father Hugh Kelly, in an article on Father Hopkins as a Jesuit and poet, tells us that three ideas from the Spiritual Exercises, the Foundation (the position of God in the world), the Contemplation on Divine Love, and the Kingdom of Christ, "had the most influence on him." 10 In citing examples from Father Hopkins' poetry to trace this influence, he repeatedly quotes passages from the Deutschland.

As we have seen, then, from the circumstances and setting in which the poem was written, and from the testimony of very worthy critics, the central theme of the poem is "The mastery of God over Mankind: His action to assert that mastery and bring all men to an acknowledgment of it -- all through the grace of Jesus Christ." We have made some effort to identify

9 Pick, 41

10 Hugh Kelly, S.J., "Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit-Poet," Studies, XXXI, 1942, 438.

this theme with that of the Spiritual Exercises, and in the following chapter will examine the internal evidence of the poem and the Exercises which further establishes this identity.

CHAPTER III

GOD'S MASTERY (Cont'd.)

Cardinal Newman once wrote the following impression of the Spiritual Exercises:

In the solemn and mysterious commerce between God and the soul, in the long hours devoted exclusively to recollection, to repentance, to good resolutions, to the study of vocation, the soul was alone with God alone; no intermediary came to place himself between the creature and the object of his faith and love; and the whole book could be summarized in this one word: 'My Son, give me thy heart.' ¹

This is merely another expression of the obvious theme of the Exercises: the mastery of God over man in Jesus Christ. This mastery is a great reality to the intellect, but even a greater reality to the will; for it is through and over the wills of His creatures that God exercises this mastery. Its perfection is found when the creature has wholly divested himself of his own will in conformity to that of his Creator.

When St. Ignatius states the purpose of the Exercises, "To conquer oneself and regulate one's life;" when he insists, in the first week and constantly reiterates thereafter that

¹ De l'Anglicanisme au Catholicisme, C. XII, Tournai, Casterman, 279. (Eng. version not yet published.)

"Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God," it is that the will of his exercitant may be conformed to the Will of God. Thus, the purpose of this first week of the Exercises is succinctly stated: Deformata reformare. (To reform that which has been deformed by sin.)

In the second week of the Exercises, whose purpose is to "conform this reform to the Divine Model," St. Ignatius proposes Christ in whom the Will of God is perfectly fulfilled ("My meat is to do the Will of Him Who sent Me"), in Whom God's mastery is supreme. At the end of this second week comes the very core of the Exercises, the election. It is no more than a resolution to find God's Will in a particular course of action, and to yield to the mastery that must rule!

The purpose of the third week of the Exercises is expressed: "To conform this conformation," and this is achieved through a realization of the great sufferings of Christ in His Sacred Passion. Here the exercitant is to strengthen himself in the Will of God. There will be many difficulties and much suffering in the Will of God for him. It is important that he be motivated by the sufferings of Christ.

The final week of the Exercises is to "transform by love the resolutions that have been confirmed." This week the exercitant spends in contemplation of Christ's resurrection, the

pledge of his own resurrection. St. Ignatius wishes to seal and confirm the resolutions of the exercitant, and to transform them by the love of Christ, Risen and Triumphant.

This, then, is the one resounding theme, which we find in an analysis of the four weeks of the Exercises: God's Mastery. It is expressed in the Principle and Foundation, where St. Ignatius insists that we were created only for God. It is found clearly in his meditations on sin and Hell, where we are driven to respect God's Mastery, and led to conformity to His Will through fear. When he proposes the magnificent and compelling personality of Christ, it is as a Model and Exemplar, but always of God's Will. When Ignatius suggests the Kingdom of Christ, the mysteries of His life -- his aim is always a complete submission through love to the mastery of God.

In the third degree of humility, which St. Ignatius proposes as the ideal service of Christ, actual poverty and opprobrium is to be desired by the exercitant solely to be more like Christ, Who is the Incarnation of His Father's Will. In the final meditation of the Exercises, The Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love, the gifts of God in creation are to effect the same end -- complete conformity to the Divine Will.

It is more than characteristic that the Deutschland

the first poem Gerard Hopkins wrote as a Jesuit, should adopt "God's Mastery" as its theme, and clearly be an artistic expression of these Exercises. It is this very theme that first escapes Hopkins in the Deutschland. There is no introductory, no excuse, no camouflage; he says simply, addressing God:

I

Thou mastering me
 God! giver of breath and bread;
 World's strand, sway of the sea;
 Lord of living and dead;

God's mastery results from creation:

I (Cont'd.)

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
 And after it almost unmade, with what dread,
 Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
 Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

Here Father Hopkins acknowledges God's dominion. He liked the image of this last line, in the precise sense in which it is used here. To him it meant the communication of God to His creature. In this communication Hopkins could see only a manifestation of the supremacy which Divine Love exercises over creation. In the following verse, he blurts out an acknowledgment of this supremacy, this terrifying mastery:

III

I did say yes
 O at lightning and lashed rod;
 Thou heardest me truer than tongue confess
 Thy terror, O Christ, O God;

Verse four resumes this acknowledgment in two images. The poet first compares himself to sand in an hour-glass on the wall, slowly running out; but because of Christ's life and death -- and here he changes the image -- he is as a well, which is constantly being refilled and replenished by water from the mountainside. It is a beautiful expression of submission to and dependence upon God.

IV

I am soft sift
 In an hourglass -- at the wall
 Fast, but mired with a motion, a drift,
 And it crowds and combs to the fall;
 I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
 But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
 Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
 Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's
 gift...

His eyes then go out to the beauty of creation, to which Father Hopkins was always extremely sensitive and for which he was extremely appreciative. There he finds written the great love and majesty of God:

V

I kiss my hand
 To the stars, lovely-asunder
 Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
 Glow, glory in thunder;
 Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
 Since, tho' he is under the world's splendor and wonder,
 His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
 For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I under-
 stand.

In verse six he concerns himself with God's will in ad-

versity. He says:

IV

...And here the faithful waver,
The faithless fable and miss.

Then he proceeds to the life of Christ:

...It dates from day of his going in Galilee, etc.
And just as St. Ignatius proposes that we go to Christ, as
our King and Model, so the poet:

VIII

...Hither then, last or first,
To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet...
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it...men go.
He hardly allows his theme ("God's mastery over men") to be
forgotten for a moment. Immediately he returns to it:

IX

Be adored among men,
God, three-numbered form;
Wring thy rebel, dogged in den,
Man's malice, with wrecking and storm...

The following verse expresses the same idea with a fierce
intensity:

X

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

This ends the first part of the poem. What St. Ignatius wrote in simple, forceful sentences, Father Hopkins has put to music. The great desire of both men for the submission of men to God's Mastery is the leit motif which adds an uncommon force to the simplicity of the Exercises, and provides the poem, which is seemingly irregular in range, with a saving unity. This was the great lesson that the poet learned from the saint.

Father Hopkins himself -- if we may judge from his commentary on the Spiritual Exercises -- seems to have regarded "God's Mastery" as the great theme of the Exercises. Once, while making the Exercises, and putting down the thoughts which most impressed him, he wrote:

God exercises His mastery and dominion over His creatures' wills in two ways -- over the affective will by simply determining it so or so (as it is said the heart of the king is in the Lord's hand to turn it which way he will); over the arbitrium (elective will) or power of pitch by shifting the creature from one pitch contrary to God's will to another which is according to it or from the less to the more so....This shift is grace. For grace is any action, activity on God's part by which, in creating or after creating, he carried the creature on or towards the end of its being, which is its self-sacrifice to God and its salvation. It is, I say, any such action on God's part; so that so far as this action or activity is God's it is Divine stress, holy spirit, and as all is done through

Christ, Christ's spirit...²

This theme is carried over into the second part of the poem: his narration of the tragedy that befell the Deutschland. The storm and the wreck are an expression of the Divine Will in action. The prayer of the tall nun is her acknowledgment of His mastery, and serves as a grace to the others on the ship and helps to bring them to the feet of Christ, Whom she supplicates ("O Christ, come quickly!"). Even in the ending of the poem, in which Hopkins prays:

XXXV

Dame, at our door
Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the
Reward:
Our King back, oh, upon English souls!

there is an echo of the poet's obsession, a familiar reverence for the Will of God and His all-embracing mastery.

In this second part of the poem, which comprises twenty-five of the thirty-five verses, Father Hopkins narrates the happenings of the tragedy with a vividness and enthusiasm which are rare even to himself. Six verses are almost pure narration; then the theme reappears in a simple, single line:

² The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Humphrey House, ed. Oxford U. Press, London, 329, 332, 326, 325, 333.

XVII

They fought with God's cold...
And they could not...

The following verse is completely lyrical and subjective. The poet finds himself in tears, and asks his heart a significant question:

XVIII

Ah, touched in your bower of bone
Are you! ...
What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?

Father Ryan interprets this to mean, "Is it, O my heart, your own natural goodness," and he adds that Father Hopkins repeatedly uses the heart for the affective will.³ Though unteachably "after evil" (*'Malum quidem appetit'*), it is the heart which is the first to recognize truth, because it is the heart that is wrung by God's action.⁴ It is the heart, in brief, that is the first to submit to the mastery of God.

The twenty-first verse is a beautiful expression of providence, or as we might say, "God's Mastery," as only the saint or poet might put it. Here Father Hopkins talks of the exile of the nuns from Germany and their destruction on the

³ Ryan, 138.

⁴ Cf. stanzas 2,3,6,7,29,30; also 14, line 13; and 27, line 5 ff.

shoals of England. Under the stress of the emotion he finds in these thoughts, he directs a stirring apostrophe to Christ, when he addresses Him as the "Master martyr:"

XXI

Loathed for a love men knew in them,
 Banned by the land of their birth,
 Rhine refused them, Thames would ruin them;
 Surf, snow, river and earth
 Gnashed: but thou art above, thou Orion of light;
 Thy unchallenging poisoning palms were weighing the worth,
 Thou martyr-master: in thy sight
 Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers -- sweet
 Heaven was astrew in them.

Again, the recurrent theme of God's mastery, in Christ, is found in the poet's interpretation. God's mastery, the wand of alchemy more true than beautiful, changes the gnashing surf and snow-flakes into "scroll-leaved flowers" and "lily showers" in which "sweet Heaven was astrew." Later, when addressing St. Francis of Assisi,⁵ he emphasizes this same contrast:

XXIII

...and these thy daughters
 And five-lived and leaved favor and pride,
 Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
 To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-
 fire glances.

⁵ The nuns were of his order.

In stanzas twenty-five to twenty-eight, he muses on the meaning of the call of the nun ('O Christ, come quickly!'). He states and rejects two possible explanations: 1) that she longed to be like Christ, her love; 2) that she longed for her reward in Heaven.

XXV

The Majesty! what did she mean?

Is it ^{...}love in her of the being as her lover had been?

're ^{...}
They we else-minded then, altogether, ...

Or is it that ^{...}she cried for the crown then,
The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating
keen?

XXVII

No, but it was not these.

Other ^{...}I gather, in measure her mind's
Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas.

In the twenty-eighth verse, Father Hopkins proposes his solution. It is the climax of the poem, the central point. All that comes after is a part of the resolution that must follow such a high point of thought and emotion. He stammers:

XVIII

But how shall I...make me room there:
Reach me a...Fancy, come faster...
Strike you the sight of it? Look at it loom there,
thing that she...there then! the master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:

He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;
 Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;
 Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and have
 done with his doom there.

This, then, is the true meaning: the storm is Christ, since He wills it, and the call ('O Christ, come quickly!') is a recognition of Him and a submission to His will. Never does the theme of God's Mastery ring so clear as here in the climax of the poem where submission to God in Christ is shown to be deeper, the deeper significance which Father Hopkins reads into the tragedy of the Deutschland. All that is left is to praise the nun for her "heart right," her "single eye." And then, before his final supplication to the nuns "drowned, and among our shoals," he again praises the awesome supremacy and majesty of God, that mastery which lingers always with him:

XXXII

I admire thee, master of the tides,
 Of the yore-flood, of the year's fall;
 ...

XXXIII

With a mercy that outrides
 The all of water, an ark
 For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides
 Lower than death and the dark;
 ...

This great awe that Father Hopkins had for God's mastery was deep and genuine. Unlike many poets, Hopkins was ever

keenly intelligent and intellectual, and his appreciation of God's dominion was primarily of that order. That his emotions and appetites should also grasp that appreciation, and keep it ever before his mind, is only a testimony of the depths to which the lesson had penetrated.

Pieces of literature sometimes present the reader with a certain amount of difficulty in distinguishing the central theme from the variations. In the book of the Exercises as in the Deutschland, there is very little difficulty in recognizing the predominate theme, and, although we might state it in various ways, God's mastery over men through Jesus Christ, His Son, seems to be an apt expression.

In the beginning we set out to show, first, that the Deutschland borrows its theme, and secondly, its sequence (pattern) of development from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Chiefly, through internal evidence, supported by the testimony of the critics, we believe that the first part of this purpose has been established. It remains only to show that in sequence and development, the ascetical considerations of the Exercises are the underlying subject-matter of the poem. It will be the concern of the second part of the thesis to establish this similarity.

CHAPTER IV
THE FIRST WEEK

More than sharing the theme of the Exercises, the Deutschland also assumes the pattern and sequence of St. Ignatius' ascetical considerations. For each of the "Four Weeks" into which the Exercises are conveniently divided, there are corresponding parts of the poem which treat of identical subject-matter. Further investigation reveals that the progress of the Four Weeks is obviously paralleled by the progress of the poem, with the result that one who is familiar with the Exercises will readily recognize them, at least in outline, in the poem. To point out the details of this parallel is our present objective.

On the first day of his retreat, the exercitant of St. Ignatius must endeavor to lodge this truth in the depths of his soul:

As a creature, my Creator is my one and only reason for existence. To keep my place in His presence, to revere His sovereign dominion, to work for His glory, practically to love Him; to do His will, that is to love Him still more: that is

my end.¹

Although St. Ignatius confirms this lesson with meditations on sin, and a contemplation on Hell, this is itself the tremendous truth that the retreatant must learn and absorb during the first week of the Exercises. More than this, it is the very basis for all that is to follow, being called by St. Ignatius: The Principle and Foundation.

This Principle and Foundation is the very beginning of the Exercises. Preceded only by several instructions, which are general directives, Ignatius begins:

Man was created to praise, reverence
and serve God, our Lord, and by this
means to save his soul.²

It is an immediate launching into the subservience and submission of man to God.

With similar directness, we find Father Hopkins beginning:

I

Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread;

1 Alexandre Brou, S.J., The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola (History and Psychology). (English version not yet published.)

2 St. Ignatius Loyola, Text of the Spiritual Exercises, The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Md., 1943, 12.

World's strand, sway of the sea;
 Lord of living and dead;

We have mentioned that the fact of this parallel is our only burden of proof. To prove apodictically that Father Hopkins advertently drew his theme and sequence from the Exercises, or even that their psychological effect brought about the similarities we are studying would seem to be quite impossible. However, knowledge of the effect the Exercises had on Father Hopkins is certainly not excluded from our purpose. Therefore, the following impressions -- Father Hopkins' thoughts on the Principle and Foundation -- are aptly inserted.

'Homo creatus est' -- Aug. 20, 1880: during this retreat, which I am making at Liverpool, I have been thinking about creation and this thought has led the way naturally enough through the Exercises hitherto. I put down some thoughts, -- We may learn that all things are created by consideration of the world without or of ourselves the world within...the latter takes on the mind more hold. ³

Father Hopkins then proceeds, in these notes on the Principle and Foundation, to an almost philosophical disquisition on the world within. The thought of creation (stanza I) led him naturally and instinctively, as he himself says,

3 Notebooks and Papers, 309

"within". It is just as we find it in the poem; for the statement of creation, as given from the first stanza, is immediately followed by:

I

... and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

Concerning this last line, we find an interesting note in Father Hopkins' commentary on the Exercises. Here he writes that grace

lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ; this is truly God's finger touching the very vein of personality, which nothing less can reach. ⁴

Immediately after this first section of the poem, dealing with creation, we find a strange lyric stanza. Catholic authors, searching for an interpretation, conclude that it pertains to an experience which the poet had while making the Spiritual Exercises. We recall that Father Hopkins said of the Deutschland: "What refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur." John Pick says the lines probably refer to some "earlier spiritual crisis in the life of Hopkins, most likely when he first experienced the full impact of the Spiritual Exercises and felt the finger of God upon him."⁵ Concerning this, Thornton adds

⁴ Ibid., 303.

⁵ Pick, 41.

God was meant to be adored, we were created to adore Him, says the first verse, followed by Hopkins' experiences while making the Spiritual Exercises. ⁶

What the poet says is:

II

I did say yes
 O at lightning and lashed rod;
 Thou heardest me truer than tongue confess
 Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
 Thou knowest the walls altar and hour and night;
 The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod
 Hard down with a horror of height;
 And the midriff astrain with learning of, laced with fire of
 stress.

In the first part of this paper, when we were emphasizing the theme of the poem, we looked upon this verse -- and certainly the verse admits of, and even suggests, this interpretation -- as the submission of the poet to God's mastery. There is no doubt, however, that the poet refers to some highly emotional experience, hidden in the shadows of the subjective, his world "within".

In the fifth exercise of the first week -- we recall that we are still dealing with the first week and its corresponding parts in the poem -- Ignatius proposes that the exercitant meditate on Hell, to see "with the eyes of the

⁶ Thornton, 44.

imagination the length, breadth, and depth of Hell." He is to ask for "an interior sense of the pains which the lost suffer," in order that, if he should forget the love of the Lord, "at least the fear of punishment" may help him not to fall into sin. Nowhere is Ignatius more vivid. He suggests that the exercitant smell the smoke, the sulphur, filth and putrid matter of Hell. He is to hear the howlings, the cries, the blasphemies against our Lord. He is to feel the worm of conscience eating deep into his soul. He is to feel the very fires of Hell itself torturing his soul.

That one of Father Hopkins' sensitivities and keen imagination would be deeply stirred by such a meditation and application of the senses seems quite certain. That this meditation and application of the senses should have accounted for the terror("...confess Thy terror") and the "swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod hard down," expressed in the second stanza, would be a further specification of what the critics, whom we have already quoted, suspect, i.e. that these lines refer to an experience of Father Hopkins' while making the Spiritual Exercises.

The meditation appears more clearly in the third stanza. Retreat-masters very frequently present this meditation effectively by asking their exercitants to hear God's judg-

ment: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into flames of everlasting fire." The imaginative Hopkins must have been filled with terror at such a consideration. In the third verse we find a vivid description of his terror:

III

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?

He reacts just as St. Ignatius wished the exercitant to react; there is nowhere to go but to God, to cling to God for protection. There can be no refuge from God but in God; no escape from this crucifixion but to the Crucified:

III (concluded)

I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of
the host.
My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame, then, tower from the
grace to the grace.

Of this first part Pick says:

Indeed these stanzas suggest his experiences with the sections of the Exercises leading up to the 'election,' when after wrestling with God he surrendered himself into His Hands, fled to the "heart of the Host..." 7

Such an interpretation seems most reasonable. At least

7 Pick, 43.

this much can be said with certitude, that, in addition to obvious similarity of content, there is also a similar catharsis of emotion achieved in both the Exercises and the poem.

There is place here for an observation concerning the meditations on sin, proposed by St. Ignatius in the first week of the Exercises. The subject is only implied -- and even then not obviously -- in the lines:

III

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind...

Father Hopkins, just as St. Ignatius, begins with the fact of creation, proceeding similarly to touch on the truths of the Principle and Foundation, and to treat of submission to God and the pains of Hell. The parallel is most obvious, except that Father Hopkins treats of sin from a distance, indirectly, almost as though he feared its mention.

It must be remembered that sin in itself, as a negation of truth, is outside the scope of poetry. But perhaps here it was not so much Father Hopkins' delicately good tastes in aesthetics but rather his ascetic's abhorrence of all sin that guided him. In his commentary on the Exercises, he wrote that we are to seek:

that feeling toward sin which our Lady felt
or would feel when sins were presented to

her and shrunk from them instantaneously and which our Lord feels in His members and God Himself, Who means us to copy His nature and character as well as we can and put on His mind according to our measure.⁸

Father Hopkins' attitude, then, was one of abhorrence and complete disavowal, which he considered a purifying and mortifying grace. Understanding of this helps us considerably in constructing the parallel which is our present concern.

The first week of the Exercises closes with the famous meditation on the Kingdom of Christ. The exercitant is to represent Christ as a "temporal King" first, and to examine his offers from a natural viewpoint. He transfers all these considerations, then, into a consideration of Christ, the Eternal King, and His call. Of course, the fruit of this exercise is to achieve a complete dedication to Christ, the Eternal King. St. Ignatius adds:

...those who wish to show greater affection, and to signalize themselves in every kind of service of their Eternal King and Universal Lord, not only will offer their whole persons to labour, but also by acting against their own sensuality, and their carnal and worldly love, will make offers of greater worth and moment saying:

⁸ Notebooks and Papers, 139

'Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favour and help, in the presence of Thine infinite goodness, and in the sight of the Heavenly court, protesting that I wish and desire, and that it is my deliberate determination (provided only that it be to Thy greater service and praise), to imitate thee in bearing all insults and reproaches, and all poverty, as well actual poverty as poverty of spirit, if only Thy Divine Majesty be pleased to choose and receive me to this life and state.⁹

In treating of the second stanza, beginning "I did say yes..." we concluded, with the critics, that it referred to some experience of Father Hopkins, while making the Spiritual Exercises. Though none of the critics suggest that the "Yes" was the answer of Father Hopkins to the call of the Eternal King, there is hardly a more probable interpretation. His "Yes," was to Christ, the King, to complete imitation of Christ in insults and reproaches; to poverty of spirit and actual poverty.

This, then, completes and establishes the parallel of the first part of the poem and the first week of the Exercises, the last meditation of which is that on the "Kingdom." In diagram:

CREATION

"Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God, our Lord..."

I

Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread, etc.

SIN AND HELL

"To see with the eyes of the imagination..."

III

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, etc.

THE KINGDOM

"...will make offers of greater worth, saying..."

III

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;
Thou heardest me truer than tongue confess, etc.

In confirmation of what has been said in this chapter, and also of what is to follow, we briefly revert to the setting of the poem. Father Hopkins, at his Rector's request had put his hand to a poem, "To the happy memory of five Franciscan Nuns, exiles by the Falk Laws, drowned between midnight and morning of December 7, 1875"¹⁰ If we were to ignore the obvious parallel with the Spiritual Exercises, which we have

¹⁰ Dedication of the poem (by Hopkins).

been pointing out, we should be faced with innumerable difficulties in explaining the "direction" of the poem. Without such an awareness, perhaps we would have far more reason to quarrel with the subjectivity of the poem, and with what would otherwise seem to be impressionism. Our interpretations would certainly be less satisfying. In the light of this parallel we are helped not only to a fuller understanding of Father Hopkins' meaning, but also of the man himself. Indeed, this seems to be the key which unlocks much of the mystery which has always hovered about the poem, to the discomfort of the puzzled critics.

It remains, then, to continue the explanation of this parallel in the second, third and fourth weeks of the Exercises. Such will be the matter of the remainder of this thesis.

CHAPTER V
THE SECOND WEEK

- Si vis perfectus esse¹

In the first week of the Exercises, the exercitant meditates on his last end, on sin and Hell, and should normally make considerable progress towards ordering his life. It is possible, however, that, if time or generosity are wanting, he may wish to leave off here. He has done much already. But, if his interest in spiritual things is strong enough, and if he desires the perfect life, a new series of exercises begins for him.

The general frame-work of these new exercises is found in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord. In all, these exercises take three weeks, more or less. It is true that Christ was in the first week, as the judge and victim of our sins, but it was not on Christ that the exercitant centered his vision. Now Christ will completely occupy his thoughts.

Of course, the introductory, and we might say the key meditation to these exercises is that on the Kingdom, which we considered in the last chapter. In the oblation of this

¹ If you wish to be perfect. As it is explained, this second week is for those who ambition high perfection.

meditation, the retreatant proposes to follow his eternal King, Christ. It is precisely this resolve that the exercises of the following three weeks will strengthen, when the retreatant will look upon his living model, the Son of God.

Educators and psychologists talk at great length of the influence of great models. In certain of the arts this "mimetism" is physical, in others predominately intellectual. There is as well a moral "mimetism". We all have something of the hero-worshipper in us, and tend to imitate the subject of our contemplation and admiration. It is this result that Ignatius sought in the attentive and loving study of Christ, which has such an important part in the Spiritual Exercises.

St. Ignatius' transition from the first to the second week is psychologically sound and coherent. The exercitant has been affected to the marrow of his bones by the profound truths of Creation, the fact of Sin and Hell. But for Christ and His Redemption, he knows that sin would be irreparable, and that life would be purposeless and hopeless; but for Christ the very gates of Heaven would be closed forever. The fourth stanza of the Deutschland follows this transition of the Exercises, and leads into the life of Christ. Again, it is noteworthy that this verse would offer the exegete many difficulties, without some help and understanding from the Spir-

itual Exercises. The poetical transition is this:

IV

I am soft sift
In an hourglass -- at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and combs to the fall;

Such is the helplessness and futility without Christ,
but because of Him (and here is the point of transition into
the second week):

IV (concluded)

I steady as a water in a well, to a pose, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

Thornton and Gardner, two of the critics already cited,
have little admiration and less understanding of these weird,
juxtaposed metaphors. Pick falls short, but is nonetheless
correct as far as he goes, in interpreting the verse to be
an expression of grace building on nature. He makes no effort
to establish the coherence of the verse, or to correlate it
with what has gone before and what will follow. However, when
viewed as a transition into the life of Christ from the start-
ling, shocking truths of the first week, the stanza with its
metaphors takes on deeper understanding and shows forth a

more exquisite craftsman.

The transition spontaneously leads Father Hopkins to Christ in the world about him, whose beauties were only a manifestation of the Master. He says:

V

I kiss my hand
 To the stars, lovely-asunder
 Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
 Glow, glory in thunder;
 Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west;
 Since, tho' he is under the world's splendor and wonder
 His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
 For I greet Him the days I meet Him, and bless when I
 understand.

Perhaps our first impulse would be to see in this verse St. Ignatius' meditation or rather contemplation for obtaining love, where Ignatius says:

The second point is to consider how God dwells in creatures, in the elements giving them being, in the plants giving them growth, in animals giving them feeling, and in men giving them understanding, and so in me giving me being, life, feeling, and causing me to understand...The third point is to consider how God works and labors for me in all created things on the face of the earth...as in the heavens, elements, plants, fruit, cattle, etc. giving them being....The fourth point is to see how all good things and all gifts descend from above...²

² Spiritual Exercises, 77.

No doubt there is much of this meditation in the stanza we are treating. The stanza itself is likewise a clear manifestation of the vast vision that Father Hopkins found in religion and the things of the spirit. But here and now, such an interpretation would be of little or no value, exegetically speaking. First, because, meaning this, the stanza would have little coherence with preceding or succeeding verses. Secondly, because the poet says in the seventh stanza:

...It dates from day / Of his going in Galilee;

And here the "it" obviously looks back to this stanza, in which Christ is seen to be under, to sustain the world's splendor and wonder. There seems, therefore, to be another meaning which will afford greater coherence. Consequently, we interpret the stanza ("I kiss my hand / To the stars, etc!") as being primarily a consideration of the Incarnation, the first mystery of Christ's life in the second week of the Exercises. The mystery of Christ in nature really stems from the mystery of the Incarnation, when God first assumed human form; when God, for the first time, immersed the Infinite into the finite. Pick says:

But the Incarnation is also the ultimate proof of the indwelling of the Divine in the natural. The call of Christ in the beauty of the world, inviting man to his own redemption and salvation, stems, then,

from the ³graces of Christ's suffering and
passion.

When Father Hopkins says:

V

Since, tho' he is under the world's splendor and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed, etc.

his meaning centers around an understanding, not of the "lovely-asunder starlight," or the "dappled-with-damson-west," but of the profound, underlying mystery of the Incarnation. It is His mystery, the God-Man's, that must be brought home to the understanding ("instressed, stressed") and sensibilities.

In the following stanza, the poet says that the Incarnation and redemptive grace of Christ's life did not spring from His heavenly life. The redemption was a remedy for man, whose first father, Adam, had lost the grace of God in sin ("The stroke dealt"). Likewise, just as the Incarnation and Redemption did not result from the Heavenly bliss of the Second Person of the Trinity, so neither did the call to the Cross which "guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt..."

VI

Not out of his bliss
Springs the stress felt
Nor first from heaven (and few know this)

...

Swings the stroke dealt --
 Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,
 That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt --
 But it rides time like riding a river
 (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).

Just as the comprehensive purpose of St. Ignatius' three final weeks could be summarized in an imitation of the Divine Model, Christ, so now Hopkins makes it clear that the grace which Christ's life brings to men is the grace to imitate Him. This grace of imitation, he says, began with the Incarnation. It springs from His life in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; from the manger, where He was born, and from His Mother's knee. This grace of imitation is found in His Passion and sweat of blood. The heart must confess this grace, blurt it out. Maybe it will be a sweetness, maybe a bitterness, but the heart must confess it!

VII

It dates from day
 Of his going in Galilee;
 Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
 Manger, maiden's knee;
 The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat
 Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,
 Though felt before, though in high flood yet --
 What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard
 at bay,

VIII

Is out with it! Oh
 We lash with the best or the worst
 Word last! ...

... Hither then, last or first,
 To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet --
 Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it -- men go.

Here then, in the scope of several verses, the poet intrudes into the intended narrative an expression of the sweetness of Christ's life, the call to His imitation, etc. Saint Ignatius had said, in the Exercises:

"Whoever desires to come with Me must labor with Me in order that -- following Me in pain, he may likewise follow Me in glory!" 4

It was the call of Christ the King. Found at the beginning of the second week, it is the key to that week and to the following weeks of the Exercises -- the imitation of Christ, the Divine Model. So Father Hopkins:

...To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet --
 Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it, men go.

The following two verses, which pray that God's Mastery, through Christ, be accomplished in man, complete the first part of the poem. Up to now the Deutschland has not been mentioned; the five nuns, to whose memory the poem is written, have not been alluded to in any way. There has been only the awe of a creature lost in the vastness of the Creator ("Thou mastering me," etc.); the nausea and terror of one who has

bitten deep into the putrid matter of sin, the horror of which must be magnified by the infinite sweetness, holiness and beauty of Christ. ("Thy terror...The frown of His face... The hurtle of Hell...where, where was a place?") ... ("For I greet Him the days I meet Him, and bless when I understand... but be adored King!") Christ is, indeed, just what Father Hopkins likened Him to, a flash of lightning in a pitch-black storm. But, what is the meaning of this first part of the poem? Why this awe, this terror, this horror, this glow?

Unless we view this first part of the poem in the light of the Spiritual Exercises, we are lost for an answer to these logical questions. Father Christopher Devlin says of this first section of the Deutschland:

Not at the throne of the Most High, but in the ghetto of human misery which Christ haunts till the end of time comes the first reconciliation. The abrupt intrusion of humanity asking for pity is a masterpiece of psychology -- or rather, since it was the work of a cavalier with no outward experience except of ball-rooms and battlefields, it is a flash of God's own mind; and Saint Ignatius obviously expects this to be no mere picture of Christ in the imagination, but that the spirit of Jesus will draw aside the curtain of phantasm and Himself step through to the soul in consolation. Other than this visitation, which afterwards becomes an invitation, I think there is no adequate explanation of the poetic thought and dramatic effects in the first ten verses of the 'Wreck of the Deutsch-

land.'

It would be silly, of course, to think of Father Hopkins as writing the Deutschland dashing from his priedieu (where a copy of the Exercises lay open) to his desk and back again. The profundity of the Exercises is not copied out in this fashion. It was to establish the clarity of this fact that, at the very beginning, we spent some time in describing the style and merit of the book of the Exercises: "With artless simplicity, energetic precision, no learned rhetoric, no mystic symbols, etc." The fruit of the Exercises, like a rare wine, requires a long period of fermentation -- seven years of silence, meditation, and familiarity with Christ, seven years of falling in love. Only after this season of fermentation can the source be tapped; only then can the Exercises yield:

I

Thou mastering me...

But once this period of parturition is past there can be no doubt of the parentage. The poem was written at a time when the Kingship of Christ was by no means a common concept, as it is today. Still, as the reign of Christ rings through all the meaning of the Exercises, so it is found in the poem.

5 Christopher Devlin, S.J., "The Ignatian Inspiration of Gerard Hopkins," Blackfriars, XVI, 189, 888.

Mea voluntas est subijcere totum mundum, et omnes hostes, et sic intrare in gloriam Patris Mei. ⁶

X

...but be adored, but be adored King.

XXXV

...Our King back, oh, upon English souls!

So there is found in the poem creation, sin, Hell; Christ in His life, death and resurrection; the pattern of the Spiritual Exercises. Again, Father Devlin says:

To anyone who gives the matter proper consideration along the lines of references and quotations the connection between the 'Wreck of the Deutschland' and the Spiritual Exercises ought to be beyond question.⁷

We summarize now, in diagrammatical form, the parallel of the second week of the Exercises and the corresponding parts of the poem. We begin with the meditation on the Kingdom:

THE KINGDOM

"Will make offers of greater worth saying..."

"To see Christ our Lord, the Eternal King, and..."

III

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;
Thou heardest me truer than tongue confess, etc.

⁶ My will is to subdue the whole world, etc. (from the Kingdom)
⁷ Devlin, 889.

Transition from CREATION to the LIFE OF CHRIST.

IV

I am soft sift
In an hourglass, etc.

...

But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

THE INCARNATION THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Since tho' he is under the world's splendor and wonder
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;

"To know him more intimately, love him more ardently, and
follow him more closely..."

VIII

...To Hero of Calvary, Christ's feet --
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it, men go.

VII

It dates from day
Of His going in Galilee;
Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
Manger, maiden's knee;

And so we see the second week of the Exercises clearly
outlined in the poetical expression of the Deutschland. Our
interpretation is corroborated by cross references, quotations
and also -- and this is of notable value -- by a lack of any
other coherent explanation to account for this strange se-
quence and pattern, so unexpected in a narrative on the disas-

ter of the Deutschland.

Now there begins the Passion of Christ, at which point the poem takes up the tragedy of the Deutschland for the first time. The drowning of the five nuns is to be identified with Christ, just as in the final section of the poem, their glory is to be that of the risen Christ. So closely does Father Hopkins associate the Passion of Christ with that of the nuns that he compares their number to the wounds of our Lord, and to the stigmata of their Father in religion, St. Francis of Assisi. But this is the matter of the chapter that is to follow.

CHAPTER VI

THE THIRD WEEK

In the comparison we are making, there is a convenient division, at this point, in both the Spiritual Exercises and the Deutschland. For it is here that St. Ignatius proceeds to the third week, a series of meditations on the Passion and Death of our Lord. It is also the beginning of the second part of the poem, in which Father Hopkins turns at last to the tragedy of the Deutschland, the drowning of the five nuns who were aboard.

Here, in the week of meditations on the Passion of our Lord, St. Ignatius seems to achieve an even greater simplicity than elsewhere in the drab little book of the Exercises. The Heavenly-minded vagabond of Loyola is quiet and unemotional in his presentation of the Passion; it is rather an experience to be lived, and Ignatius asks the exercitant to beg God that he may experience deeply:

...here to begin with great force to
strive to grieve, and bewail, and lament,
and in the same way continue labouring
through the other points. ¹

¹ Spiritual Exercises, 62.

He urges the retreatant not to think of the Resurrection of our Lord nor of any other joyful thoughts, holy though they be. Frequently enough the mystery is changed, beginning with the Agony in the Garden, through all the mysteries of the Passion, and ending with the death of Christ on the slope of Mount Calvary. In his presentation of the Passion, we find a noteworthy characteristic of the Saint. Ignatius is not given to abstract thoughts and values, but rather, he is always impressing the mind and heart with facts. He gives facts rather than doctrines for meditation: the fact of our dependence on God; the fact of our sins; the fact of Hell; and now -- the fact of Christ's awful suffering.

This is not to say that St. Ignatius was not concerned with the lessons to be drawn from an assimilation of these facts. On the contrary the significance of these facts is everything, but grace must teach these lessons to the heart of the retreatant.

In turning to the tragedy of the Deutschland, Father Hopkins, like St. Ignatius, does little more than narrate the facts surrounding the death of the nuns. Then, with characteristic Ignatian terseness, he identifies the suffering of Christ with that of the nuns; he compares them, five in number, to the wounds of the suffering Christ, and makes it

clear that he regards them as "co-redeemers with Christ."
They are re-enacting the Redemption, which His Sacred Passion
first achieved.

He begins with straight narration of fact, as we have
said:

XII

On Saturday sailed from Bremen,
American-outward-bound,
Take settler and seamen, tell men with women,
Two-hundred souls in the round --
...

In round numbers there were two-hundred souls, counting
emigrants and the crew of the ship, among whom were both men
and women. We are put in mind of the Ignatian prelude:

The first prelude is to call to mind the
history of the matter which I have to con-
sider; which is here how the three Divine
Persons beheld all the surface and cir-
cuit of the terrestrial globe, covered
with men. And seeing how all men descend-
ing into Hell, They determined, in Their
eternity, that the Second Person should
become man to save the human race...²

There were two-hundred men and women, some sailors,
others emigrants. Father Hopkins, looking upon them, reflects:

2 Spiritual Exercises, 36.

XII (Cont'd.)

...
 O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing
 The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned;

But just as the Blessed Trinity took pity on man, so:

XII (Concluded)

...
 Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing
 Not vault them, the millions of rounds of thy mercy not reeve
 even them in?

Father Devlin, whom we have quoted, says of the Deutsch-
land:

The ship is the sinful, unheeding world,
 "O Father, not under thy feathers," full of
 crude natural goodness and lovable human
 weakness. Then the wreck, and one only, a
 woman, stands straight and hallows God as
 Father in the confusion.³

And Father Devlin continues to say that it was this reincarna-
 tion, so to speak, of the Incarnation "that ran through to
 his marrow and started him off at all on the poem...." ³

At any rate this narration sets the scene for the Passion.
 This ship, the Deutschland, is to be the scene of a new re-
 demption and reconciliation of man to God. This reconciliation
 to God is won for man by the suffering piece of humanity that

³ Devlin, 889.

Christ becomes, becomes now in these five nuns; Christ, forever, dwelling in the abysses of human misery and suffering.

XIII

Into the snows she sweeps,
Hurling the haven behind,
The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keep,
For the infinite air is unkind,
...

XIV

She drove in the dark to leeward,
She struck -- not a reef or a rock
But the combs of a smother of sand; night drew her
Dead to the Kentish Knock;
...

XV

Hope had grown grey hairs,
Hope had mourning on,
Trenched with tears, carved with cares,
Hope was twelve hours gone;
...

XVI

One stirred from the rigging to save
The wild woman-kind below,
With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave --
He was pitched to his death at a blow,
...

XVII

They fought with God's cold --
And they could not ...

Finally, the poet turns from the distress of the drowning passengers:

XVII (Cont'd.)

Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,
A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

The effect reaches deep into the heart of the poet, a complete stanza is needed to absorb the emotions that well up in him:

XVIII

Ah! touched in your bower of bone
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
Do you! mother of being in me, heart.
...

Now the poet takes up the cry of the Nun ("O Christ, come quickly!"), and for ten stanzas struggles to grasp and see the meaning. In dealing with the theme of the poem, we have treated of Hopkins' solution to this problem: his interpretation of the call of the drowning nun. Because at that time we were listening for the ring of the poem's theme in all the thirty-five stanzas, it was not to our point to dwell over-long on that single consideration. However, here in the "third week, the passion" we find it is the heart and center of our interpretation.

It is the heart and center of our interpretation, for in

that call, Father Hopkins sees the nuns as identified with the suffering Christ. In the twenty-eighth stanza that identity is to break upon Father Hopkins like an apocalyptic vision, and suddenly he is to see, "'Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head!" That is the meaning of the call; that is to be the meaning of the suffering and death of the "Five! the finding and sake and cipher of suffering Christ." The mystery here is the great mystery of Calvary ("To Hero of Calvary, Christ's feet...."); this is the light that is to blind and to teach the poet.

But this meaning is not clear to him as he ponders the cry of the nun. He muses over her meaning, suggests two interpretations to himself, but rejects each. In the nineteenth stanza he says simply:

XIX

Sister, a sister calling
 A master, her master and mine: --
 And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling;
 The rash smart slogging brine
 Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one;
 Has one fetch in her; she rears herself to divine
 Ears; and the call of the tall nun
 To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's
 brawling.

XX

She was the first, of a five and came
 Of a coiffeed sisterhood.
 ...

Now he begins to fall upon the meaning slowly. Gradually his mind sees the passion of Christ limned in the passion of His five. Like Christ, they suffered rejection:

XXI

Loathed for a love men knew in them,
Banned by the land of their birth,
Rhine refused them, Thames would ruin them;

The vision begins to clear; the association with the passion of Christ is stirred by a reflection on their number:

XXII

Five! the finding and sake
And cipher of suffering Christ.
Mark, the mark is of man's make
And the word of it sacrificed.

He is coming even closer, in his allusion to the stigmata of Saint Francis, to the meaning that he is soon to see in a flash:

XXIII

Joy fall to thee, Father Francis,
Drawn to the life that died;
With the knarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance, his
Lovescape crucified
And seal of his seraph-arrival! and these thy daughters
And five-lived and leaved favor and pride,
Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his fall-fire glances.

In the next verse he states the call, and promptly *
questions the meaning:

XXIV

...
She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails
Was calling 'O Christ, come quickly':

XIV

The Majesty! what did she mean?

Bernard Kelly has said, "These meanings, that a mind less
pitilessly direct would have rested in, the poet sweeps aside.
They are half-way houses, the less perfect."⁴ He was refer-
ing to the interpretations of the call that Father Hopkins
rejects. The first, we recall, was that the nun wished to
suffer for the love of Christ.

XXV

...
Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?
They were else-minded then, altogether, ...
Or is it that she cried for the crown then,
The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating
keen?

The poet answers "no," to these suggestions:

⁴ Pick, 49.

XVII

...No, but it was not these.

Relentlessly now he strips away these other interpretations, and quickly he begins to see. His mind is stunned by the coming of it; his words are sputtering, unable to equal the meaning of his mind. It was the Incarnation and Redemption of Christ; it was the identity, the indwelling of Christ:

XXVIII

But how shall I...make me room there:
 Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster --
 Strike you the sight of it? Look at it loom there,
 Thing that she...there then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head;

Pick comments:

Here then is the climax of the great ode, the point at which the meaning of the whole, the First as well as the Second part, explodes upon one with a force beyond the bounds of mere vocabulary. Here is the perfect oblation, the perfect self-sacrifice, the perfect self-fulfillment, the Christus and the alter Christus.⁵

The penetrating mind of Father Hopkins pours forth its deepest, finest fruit in these lines, for to him re-enacting the Incarnation and Redemption was the sole end of life. In his commentary on the Spiritual Exercises, he wrote:

⁵ Pick, 49.

The world, man, should after its own manner give God being in return for that being He has given. This is done by the great sacrifice. To contribute then to that sacrifice is the end for which man was made.⁶

And the particular phase, perhaps the greatest moment, of the Redemption, the Passion of Christ -- how well Hopkins saw into it! "The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart."

Now there is a sudden quiet reflectiveness in the words that follow:

XXIX

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was a single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;

He compares the soul of the nun to that of Simon Peter, firm against the blast as the Tarpeian rock, and at the same time fanned into a beacon of light for all the world.

XXIX (Cont'd.)

...
The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast
Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

⁶ Unpublished Mss.

All that is to follow in the Deutschland d pertains to the Resurrection. The wounds of death are now ræ·adiance; the sorrow and grief of the Passion are now joy. Of the nun in whom Christ has been e-crucified, he says simply and beæ autifully:

XXI

Well she has Thee for the pain, for the
Patience;

...

CHAPTER VII
THE FOURTH WEEK
CONCLUSION

Now the wounds of the Passion must shine forth in radiance, the languor becomes splendor, death grows into life! At the death of our Lord, the termination of His terrible Passion, everything was so incomplete. For the Jews, who crucified Him, there was the celebration and a sense of victory. Within forty-eight hours after they had set their diabolical schemes into action, all was accomplished! For Christ there was only defeat. His Mother and a few friends took the body down from the cross. The disciples thought it was the end, as we learn from the two who set off on the road to Emmaus. They had lived in anticipation of the kingdom of which the Christ had spoken. Now all anticipations were shattered on the rocks of Calvary.

And then...the unbelievable resurrection! The great victory that changed a seemingly certain defeat into the most glorious of triumphs.

No doubt St. Ignatius appreciated the incompleteness of the Passion without the Resurrection. "Whoever desires to come with Me must labor with Me in order that, following Me in pain he may likewise follow Me in Glory." The whole psycho-

logy of the Exercises, just as the whole science of asceticism, points to this crowning glory of Christ, which is the pledge of our own resurrection and future glory.

The poet sometimes, and understandably, takes his privilege of liberty from this psychology. Suffering has a strange and fascinating beauty of its own, and the poet is free to offer us only a contemplation of this beauty. Gerard Manley Hopkins might have ended his magnificent ode with the end of the tragedy of the Deutschland, but it was not for Father Gerard Manley Hopkins to do so. He could hardly have ended with:

XXVIII

Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch
and have done with his doom there.

This would have been the Passion, uncrowned by the glory that necessarily follows. Both St. Ignatius and Father Hopkins had a keen sense for this incompleteness. Ignatius had written, at the beginning of his fourth week:

The third prelude is to ask for what I want;
it will be here to ask for grace to be intensely glad and to rejoice in such great glory and joy of Christ our Lord. ¹

Father Hopkins, vibrating with a joy that ran deep into

¹ Spiritual Exercises, 71.

his fibre, questions simply:

XXX

Jesu, heart's light,
 Jesu, maid's son,
 What was the fest followed the night
 Thou hadst glory of this nun? --

Ignatius asked that the retreatant take joy in the victory of the Resurrection, and to exult in the beauty of the Divinity, "Which in the Passion seemed to hide itself." Father Hopkins, too:

XXXI

...
 Well she has thee for the pain, for the
 Patience;

And finally in the last point of the fourth week, Ignatius says:

The fifth is to regard the office of comforter, which Christ our Lord exercises, comparing it with the manner in which friends are wont to console one another.²

Here Father Hopkins, in praising God as comforter, in hymning the chant of gratitude, rises to a delicate beauty, and penetrates to a profound understanding.

² Spiritual Exercises. 72.

XXXII

I admire thee, master of the tides,
 Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;
 The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
 The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;
 Staunching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind;
 Ground of being, and granite of it: past all
 Grasp God, throned behind
 Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides.

XXXIII

With a mercy that outrides
 The all of water, an ark
 For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides
 Lower than death and the dark;
 A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in
 The last-breath penitent spirits -- the uttermost mark ^{prison,}
 Our passion-plunged giant risen,
 The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm
 of his strides.

The poem achieves a forceful ending in two supplications, one to Christ ("Double-natured Name") the other to the nun ("Dame, drowned, and among our shoals,") whom Father Hopkins has identified with Christ, both in suffering and glory. There is a patent significance in these final verses, which tends to substantiate the comparison which it has been our burden to prove. In showing the parallel between the Exercises and the Deutschland, we had identified the Passion and Resurrection of the nuns with that of Christ. Such an identification was necessary for the integrity of our comparison. We say that there is a patent significance in these final verses, because

here his address to Christ, and immediately after to the nun, helps to establish the identification that Father Hopkins' mind had made.

To Christ:

XXXIV

Now burn, new born to the world,
 Double-natured name,
 The Heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
 Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,
 Mid-numbered He in three of the thunder-throne!
 ...

To the nun:

XXXV

Dame, at our door
 Drowned, and among our shoals,
 Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the
 Reward:
 Our King back, oh, upon English souls!
 ...

Like Christ, Who lives and was crucified in her, the nun has entered into glory ("in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward.") and by her passion, her co-redemption with Christ, has brought the "King" back upon English souls -- the King who had promised his laborers that they should likewise "enter with Me into glory."

X

...But be adored, be adored King!

In both the poem and the Exercises there is a strange,

but easily understood, lack of finality. With the end of the Spiritual Exercises, the retreatant finds that he has just begun. Now he must live the great realities to which he has been so close. So, in the conclusion of the poem, does the heart of Father Hopkins wander into the future, praying that his King may return to English souls, that He would rise again among them, be a dawn to bring light to their darkness, a luminous eastern sky, brightening rare-dear Britain, more and more; He -- the King -- our pride, prince, hero high-priest, the fire of our heart's charity, Lord of all our grandest thoughts, which are of Him.

XXXV (Cont'd.)

Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us,
 Be a crimson-cressed east,
 More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls³
 Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
 Our heart's charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's
 throngs' Lord.

The end.

St. Ignatius, the sublime vagrant of Monserrat, and Father Hopkins, charging his song with the vastness of this vision, are the men of Galilee, standing and looking up to Heaven, knowing that Jesus, Who has been taken up into Heaven, shall so come as they had seen Him going.

³ Meaning: as his reign goes on.

We have already said that there is admittedly a less strong parallel between the Exercises and the Deutschland in these final weeks. Whereas Father Hopkins, in the first part of the poem, seemed to be deliberately intent on reproducing the Exercises in verse, here, in the last part, the parallel stems from his also-deliberate identification of the suffering and glory of the nuns with the suffering and glory of Christ.

In the first part, certain meditations, found in the poem, e.g. creation, sin, Hell, the Kingdom, the Incarnation, etc., stand out clearly as the subject-matter of the Exercises, clearly share the same spirit and ring of the Exercises; so obvious is this to one who is familiar with the Exercises that he almost expects the necessary complement of the weeks of the Passion and Resurrection. Again we repeat that the Passion and Resurrection in the poem are Christ's in that the poet clearly identifies Him with the first of the five nuns and with her group. The events of the Passion, Christ before Pilate, etc., are not to be found in the poem. The scourge is the "Rash smart slogging brine." The Cross is "the wild waters" in which the nuns are "sisterly-sealed." And the cry of Christ on the Cross is: "O Christ, come quickly!"

The Resurrection is completed in a few quietly joyful

stanzas, and the poem ends with a note of admiration and a plea of supplication.

The parallel, however, of these final weeks seems no less satisfying, though perhaps it is not as clear and direct as the comparisons found in the first two weeks of the Exercises and the corresponding part of the poem. The conviction we are left with in either case is that the tragedy of the Deutschland was an occasion that satisfied the conscience of Father Hopkins, and freed him to take up his pen once more. As far, then, as his purpose and theme allowed him, deliberately or indeliberately, he reproduced the Spiritual Exercises. Of this there is overwhelming internal evidence and the testimony of competent authority.

In the face of those numerous critics who believe that Father Hopkins' cassock muted his energies, and who believe that "Christ is the eternal thief of energies," it is more than gratifying to taste the flavor and recognize the inspiration of the Spiritual Exercises in the poems of Hopkins. His subject-matter is always drawn from the homely little book drawn up by Ignatius to help men order their lives. And perhaps no poem so completely comprehends the subject-matter and spirit of this little book than the poem we are treating, the Deutschland.

As we progressed in the treatment of our comparison, since it was of our purpose to show that the sequence, as well as subject-matter, of the poem was taken from the Exercises, we ignored many obvious points of comparison, which did not occur in sequence. Because it does not seem right that they should go without mention, our final diagram will survey the whole of the Exercises and the Deutschland, clarifying these points of comparison.

THE PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

"God" is the "giver of breath and bread," who "bound bones and veins" in man, and "fastened me flesh." He is ever wont to "touch afresh" his creation by His grace and mercy. But this Creatorship implies other than personal tenderesses; it means "lightning and lashed rod...Thy terror." But for God's infinite mercy and "Christ's gift," man would be and is, of himself, "soft sift in an hour-glass." Through the Creator's goodness, God is with us always, always "under the world's splendor and wonder," though He is the "world's strand, sway of the sea," still does He "wring man's malice, with wrecking and storm." Though He is the "Father and fondler of hearts," still does He "forge His will, with an anvil-ding and with fire." Though His is a "lovely-felicitous Providence," still must He have His "dark descending," and "make mastery in all

of us." And man, on his part, must "say yes," "confess Thy terror."

THE FIRST WEEK

Because of Original Sin, even though we "dream we are rooted in earth," must we someday return to "dust!" For "there must be the sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come." Because of our personal sins, we have seen "the frown of his face," staggered at the "hurtle of Hell." "The-last-breath-penitent spirits" that we are, must we go "poor sheep back." "Past all" must we "grasp God," who awaits us after "death, with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides." To God then must we go, who has for us a "mercy that outrides the all of water, an ark for the listener; for the lingerer... a love" which we know "glides lower than death and the dark;" "The bay of thy blessing...the millions of rounds of thy mercy;" these shall "reeve us in." God is the "heaven-haven of the Reward," "kind, but royally reclaiming his own."

THE SECOND WEEK

All of Father Hopkins' poems on the Incarnation give solid evidence of his own warm devotion to Christ, and profound appreciation of the meaning of this sublimest of mysteries. Here his vision comprehends the myriad aspects of Christ, "born to

the world, double-natured name, the heaven flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled miracle-in-Mary-of-flame." "It dates from day of His going in Galilee," when first He lived the life of God within His Mother -- "warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey." Then it was the "manger," in which His Mother laid Him, and soon she held Him on her "maiden's knee." The same Christ it was Who was wakened "with a we are perishing in the weather of Gennesareth." Father Hopkins anticipates Catholic devotional trend, in appealing to Christ the King. Only in the Exercises was Christ familiar as "King." "But be adored, but be adored King ...Our King back, oh, upon English souls!"

THE THIRD WEEK

Clearly then Father Hopkins identifies the tall nun with "the suffering Christ." He was the "martyr-master...the passion-plunged giant," and she His copy. His was "the dense and driven passion, and frightful sweat," her's "God's cold...the in-board seas swirling and hawling; the rash smart slogging brine." -- "the finding and sake and cipher of suffering Christ!" Hopkins wishes joy to Francis of Assisi in these his daughters, who himself had known "the knarls of the nails, the niche of the lance, his lovescape crucified." The meaning of the tragedy of the Deutschland breaks like a vision: "Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head." It is a re-enactment of His Passion,

He, "the Hero of Calvary." His passion is so sacred that it is "tenderer in prayer apart."

THE FOURTH WEEK

But as Christ is a "giant risen" and his Resurrection and life among men is a clarion call to the heart, "a dayspring to the dimness of us, a crimson-cressed east;" "Well" does the nun have "Thee for the pain, for the patience." She, too, like Christ, Who was crucified in her, shared in the radiance of resurrection. "Jesu, heart's light, Jesu, maid's son, what was the fest followed this night Thou hadst glory of this nun?"

XXXV

Dame, at our door
Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the
Reward:
Our King back, oh, upon English souls!

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by John J. Powell, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

March 25, 1950
Date

John B. Courath, S.J.
Signature of Adviser